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# A Testimonial of Library Leadership -- Learning from the Past -- A Book Review of: Eric Moon; the Life and Library Times

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# Book Reviews — Monographic Musings

Column Editor: **Debbie Vaughn** (Reference Librarian, College of Charleston) <vaughnd@cofc.edu>

**Column Editor's Note:** June means one thing in Charleston: *Spoletto Festival USA* ([www.spolettousa.org](http://www.spolettousa.org)), the world-renowned arts festival that brings together a unique and exciting blend of opera, theatre, music, dance, artwork, and more. How fitting that reviewer **Phillip Powell** offers commentary on two music books in this issue's *Monographic Musings*. Happy reading, everyone! — DV

**Jones, David Wyn. ed. Haydn. Oxford Composer Companions.** New York: Oxford UP, 2002.  
0198662165. 848 pages. \$75.00.

Reviewed by **Phillip Powell** (Reference Librarian,  
College of Charleston) <powellp@cofc.edu>

As one whose fairly avid avocation is the collection and enjoyment of classical music recordings, this reviewer has never gravitated much toward **Joseph Haydn's** works. **Haydn's** contemporaries, or near contemporaries, **Mozart** and **Beethoven**, are well-represented in my collection, but **Haydn** is woefully missing with the exception of a symphony or two and his oratorio "The Creation." Having examined this most recent addition to the relatively new *Oxford Composer Companions* series, it just may be worthwhile to become more familiar with **Haydn**.

At first, **Haydn** appears to be a companion or handbook similar to so many others a reference librarian encounters. Nearly 450 pages of the volume are in typical encyclopedic order. Preceding the main body are approximately 20 prefatory pages of background information that rather set the stage for **Haydn's** life and travels. Two that interested the reviewer were the family trees of the **Haydns** and also the **Esterhazys**—the nobility under whom **Haydn** was employed. It is interesting to note **Haydn's** wife was not included in the family tree. In fact, it took some digging to realize that he ever married. The second item of interest was the map of Europe indicating the various towns and cities where **Haydn** either worked or visited. Not only was he in and around Vienna, he took two extended tours to England. Within the opening pages, too, the "Thematic Overview" serves as the closest thing to an index by listing entries under general subject headings. Even reading this list gives the reader an opportunity to get an indication of **Haydn's** milieu, both personal and professional.

Entries vary widely in length, dependent upon the topic. From a two-sentence paragraph about a lesser-known symphony to an essay about **Haydn's** quartets, each entry is signed, and if not signed, it is attributable to the editor. The list of contributors is a mix of Europeans and Americans mostly. Judging by their titles and their locations, they are almost entirely an academic or musically related group. One longer essay is about performance practice during **Haydn's** time. As an aside, performance practice is defined as "the condition in which **Haydn's** music was performed and the traditions that informed its realization..." Apparently, how they did it then and how it is done now are significantly different. All essays are written by different experts in the field. Following many entries, there are bibliographies of books and journal articles that lend themselves well to the topic.

Two appendices follow the main body of the volume. The first appendix is **Haydn's** complete oeuvre. It is arranged by **Hoboken** number. That is not **Hoboken** as in New Jersey, but rather, **Anthony van Hoboken** (who was the compiler of **Haydn's** catalog of music). Appendix two gives the "text incipits" by **Hoboken** number. It would appear only someone who is well versed in musicology will know what a "text incipit" is. The reviewer does not.

This is an excellent compilation of **Haydn's** life and work. It is very readable and, at times, engaging.

**McCants, Clyde T. Opera for Libraries: A Guide to Core Works, Audio and Video Recordings, Books, and Serials.** Jefferson, NC: McFarland, 2003. 0786414421. 204 pages. \$45.00.

Reviewed by **Phillip Powell** (Reference Librarian,  
College of Charleston) <powellp@cofc.edu>

Upon first glance, the reader sees **Mr. McCants** is described as an avid opera lover and library patron. Also, he is a retired minister from South Carolina. Otherwise, nothing more is said about his background. The question arose if this would be another work written by someone whose love and admiration for a topic outweighs his ability to make a skillful, lucid analysis. It took searching through *Biography and Genealogy Master Index*, which led me to *Who's Who in America*, to find **McCants** demurring about his background. He was an English professor in North Carolina and later became a Presbyterian minister. It is this combination of being a man who communicates well, plus an all-consuming devotion to the art, that makes this book extremely readable and informative. This is especially the case for its intended audience of librarians intent upon starting a collection of opera recordings.

Over half of *Opera for Libraries* is devoted to the chapter titled "Core Collection." The reader meanders alphabetically by composer through mostly standard operatic repertoire. Most readers who have listened to opera on Public Radio have, at least, been exposed to the titles. A couple American operas are the exception for the reviewer. An annotation might include biographical information on the composer, a brief plot summary, critical reception, or noting a particularly important performance of the opera. Much of it is fairly subjective, but the author supports his statements. One knows immediately he has a significant knowledge of the art form. Additionally, **McCants** puts forth his recommendations of recordings (primarily) and videos he finds noteworthy. It is here where he is at his critical best.

There is a shorter chapter following titled "Beyond the Basics." It consists of less known and lesser-performed operas still worth consideration. By making this distinction, this is important for the potential collector, either in a library or for a personal collection. The annotations are noticeably shorter and the recommendations of recordings fewer. Beyond this, **McCants** leans more to the library and discusses printed sources appropriate for reference and periodical collections.

This is a very good book. Whether it is worth the \$45 price tag or not is probably determined by its usefulness to the reader. 🍀

## A Testimonial of Library Leadership — Learning from the Past

**A Book Review of: Eric Moon; the Life and Library Times**

by **Eleanor I. Cook** (Serials Coordinator & Professor,  
Appalachian State University) <cookei@appstate.edu>

**Column Editor's Note:** This is not a typical, formal book review — let me say this right up front. I was bushwhacked into owning this book, and that is a story worth telling. Here is where it all begins ... — EC

continued on page 75



*Eric Moon; the Life and Library Times*, by Kenneth Kister.  
Jefferson, NC: McFarland Press, 2002.

Reviewed by Eleanor I. Cook (Appalachian State University)  
<cookei@appstate.edu>

I was strolling the exhibits at the ALA Annual conference in Atlanta, 2002. I'm a sort who looks at every booth, up and down all the aisles. I stop and talk to my friends along the way. I always enjoy stopping at the McFarland Press exhibit since they are my neighbors in western North Carolina. But this stop was different than normal. Three jovial men ambushed me; they pulled me in like a mark at a carnival. I expected to see Robbie Franklin there — he's the owner of McFarland. That was not a surprise. But the other two fellows — one was familiar but somehow out of context — oh yes, that was John Berry — the Editor of *Library Journal* — but who was this other guy? I did not know him, but he was charming. If I had known what I knew after reading the book — I would have immediately understood. What happened — these characters convinced me that I should not only read this book — but also buy it — I initially thought they were trying to give it to me! Oh, they were clever about this — before I knew it, I had my credit card out. And this was no slim volume — it was a hefty tome, even in paperback. I lugged it home (fortunately I was driving, not flying) and it sat on my living room side table for nearly a year before it rose to the top of the reading pile. (I read voraciously and often at 3 am.) As it turned out, the timing was fortuitous ...

This book — the biography of Eric Moon, is something unusual in our literature. It's not just a biography of a leader in our field; it's also a no-holds barred exposé of an important era in our profession.

Let me get my major complaint off my chest quickly and then move on: There is too much detail in some places in this book — and a problem with repetition. The whole thing would have benefited from serious editing — and that in itself is an irony! But I am forgiving on this point because sometimes repetition is a good thing, as it drives home important concepts. I slogged through the entire volume, repetition and all. You might want to consider doing the same.

I found this book an absolutely fascinating study in leadership. It captures an important era in American librarianship. It illustrates major themes from which we can learn. The book resonated with me as I was in the throes of serving as the President of the North American Serials Interest Group (NASIG) while I was reading it, in the summer of 2003.

The book documents Moon's entire life in excruciating detail. Some parts you can skim. Yet, the details are part of the charm of the book.

I was embarrassed to discover important facts I did not know about library history. To our younger colleagues just now entering the field, some of this will seem like ancient history! In my case, I was just out of library school when some of these events had recently happened. And I know or have met a number of the people portrayed, so I found that quite interesting.

Eric Moon started out as a librarian in the United Kingdom, moved to Canada, and then assumed the Chief Editor's position at *Library Journal* in the late 1950's. He was the mentor and predecessor of current *LJ* editor John Berry. In 1977 he served as the President of the American Library Association — an election result that many people then never would have believed possible — read the book to find out why!

The book captures the climate of the U.S. library scene in the 1960's and 1970's. It gives credit to Eric Moon (and others) for questioning prejudicial racial policies still hanging on in certain southern library associations and library systems at that time. It documents the relaxed social mores and rebellious atmosphere of the hippie age. If you think there is risqué stuff going on at ALA conferences now, it doesn't compare to the shenanigans of those wild and crazy times. Much of it is

revealed, but not so much to be offensive. Also, Eric Moon's influence on library media (both at *LJ* and later as Chief Editor of Scarecrow Press) has many lessons from which to learn.

There are several reasons I think this book should be read by all librarians aspiring to leadership positions. Some of the lessons I learned from this book, in a nutshell:

1. Pay attention to your influences along the way; old friends/enemies can come back to help you or haunt you
2. Excellence and dependability in all you do will get you far
3. Stick to your principles — and know what they are!
4. Don't be afraid to try something new
5. Controversy sells magazines
6. Your friends are important — keep them close to you, and reward them when you are able
7. You're only human — just because you are professionally successful doesn't mean you won't suffer bumps along the way in your personal life
8. There is more than one path to the top
9. Once you are at the top, you might be surprised at the view
10. Issues you weren't expecting can blindside you and change your priorities

Some people enjoy the "politics" of life and Eric Moon certainly had a zest for the political. He was part of an earlier time though, and librarians today might find some parts of the story downright irritating. They might say, "Oh, he's your typical 'male librarian,' sprung from the womb as a Director." However, as time goes on, I think the main character redeems himself in many ways. He clearly believed in social responsibility in ways many of his contemporaries did not. His biographer also takes care to not be unfair. For example, Moon's first wife was clearly a long-suffering, stay-at-home spouse. She is portrayed as disinterested in Moon's career, and she assumed the traditional role of that time. His second (current) wife was (and is) a modern-day professional librarian, thoroughly engaged in the issues, with a more upfront, supporting role. Essentially, Moon's life reflects the signs of the times. He, like so many of us, had to find his way through the issues of the day. Naturally, in the earlier chapters, he comes off looking like the way men were then — usually the ones in charge. Yet, there are cameo appearances all along the way of fabulously astute and gifted women in publishing and librarianship.

There is also no question that Eric Moon supported civil rights and other social causes long before they became fashionable. Moon was a close colleague and mentor of a number of important figures in library leadership who came up through the ranks and became role models for women and African-Americans. Kister suggests that this is because of Moon's British working class upbringing and his experiences coming up hardscrabble. Moon's reputation for being a gadfly ruffled many feathers, yet it also attracted devoted followers (known as the "Moonies.") It also landed him in a powerful position at a major library publication. He served *Library Journal* for many years with distinction, and paved the way for John Berry, who is still at the helm today. The chapters discussing various controversial topics tackled by *LJ* during Moon's tenure as editor piqued my interest to the point where I literally went to our periodical stacks and flipped through some of the volumes from that period.

Moon's experiences with the American Library Association are simply fascinating, and provide many insights into the mechanics of running a large association. Eric Moon did not get groomed for library association leadership in a traditional fashion and in fact, many of the scions of ALA openly despised him. He heckled them and questioned the status quo. Moon became President of ALA not through the traditional balloting process, but rather through the alternative petition process. In other words, the Association nominating committee did not invite him to run — instead — a group of followers signed a petition to add his name to the ballot. Then, when he took the helm, a controversy arose that sidelined his original platform goals, which was a frustrating experience for him, as it would be for anyone in such a position. I was reading this book

continued on page 76







# LEGAL ISSUES



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## Legally Speaking — Tarisoff, Patron Confidentiality, and Duty to Society: An Ethical Quandary

by **Bryan M. Carson, J.D., M.I.L.S.** (Coordinator of Reference and Instructional Services, Librarian for Philosophy, Religion, & Russian/Eastern European Studies, Western Kentucky University Libraries, 1 Big Red Way, Bowling Green, Kentucky 42101; Phone: 270-745-5007; Fax: 270-745-2275) <bryan.carson@wku.edu>

What do you do if a patron appears to be suicidal? What if a patron requests a book on how to build a bomb? Should librarians give out the information and keep the request confidential, or should we disclose the information to the appropriate people? Of all the ethical dilemmas in the field of librarianship, the balance between confidentiality and societal interest is the most difficult to decide. This article will take a look at the issue and make suggestions based on ethical principles used in other professions.

The **ALA Code of Ethics** proclaims: "We protect each library user's right to privacy and confidentiality with respect to information sought or received and resources consulted, borrowed, acquired or transmitted."<sup>1</sup> We have a duty to the intellectual freedom of our patrons. Indeed, there are laws in most states forbidding disclosure of patron information,<sup>2</sup> and the **Family Educational Privacy Rights Act** applies to academic institutions receiving federal funds.<sup>3</sup>

As most readers know, I am a very strong

advocate of library privacy rights.<sup>4</sup> There are many reasons why it is in the interest of the individual and of society to protect information about the materials that patrons may read. I am also very concerned about the **U.S.A. PATRIOT Act**, some provisions of which I believe may be unconstitutional. As **Richard Rubin** has stated, "[O]ne could argue there are many acts of speech that should be protected regardless of whether *harm* arises. After all, a cardinal reason why free speech is protected is that it can indeed produce substantive results that some would consider harmful while others would consider the same results salutary. Similarly, what if *harm* arises from truthful speech? Shouldn't such speech be protected regardless of *harm*? The point is that if people are to speak freely, speech must generally be protected regardless of its consequences; otherwise a chilling effect on speech would result."<sup>5</sup>

Along with the importance of preserving free speech, there is also a duty to the greater society. And in some cases there is a responsibility to the patron as well. There are two competing ethical principles involved in the situation of the potentially harmful patron. One is intellectual freedom, but the other is a duty to society. For example, **Robert Hauptman** poses the question: "Must one simply respond as a librarian who is there to serve, or does one have a higher duty 'to society in general' . . . to make a professional judgment and refuse to help the patron, [sic] if detrimental effects are suspected?"<sup>6</sup>

What are the circumstances under which librarians should disclose information about patron requests? Some would argue that "National Security" is one. However, in the face of vague concepts such as "National Security," I would not disclose information without a search warrant. (Most privacy laws contain exceptions for validly issued search warrants.) I'm not going to discuss this issue at all. Instead, the issue I will be discussing involves a patron who poses an immediate and identifiable risk to themselves or others.

### The Ethical Background

*There is a paradox in current librarian-ship regarding the censorship of controversial materials. On the one hand, librarians tend to depoliticize or neutralize their role in the process of information provision, considering themselves just as*

*"custodians of information" rather than "judges of what is and what is not acceptable. . . ." On the other hand, however, librarians strongly politicize and moralize the issue of censorship. We seem to treat the Library Bill of Rights as unquestionable or unchallengeable.<sup>7</sup>*

As professionals, it is very important that we have an ethical code of conduct and that we follow this code to the greatest extent possible. Our ethical decisions affect people's lives.<sup>8</sup> We have a specialized duty to our patrons and our profession to follow ethical guidelines. In fact, the very definition of a profession involves ethical guidelines. According to the New York Court of Appeals:

A profession is not [just] a business. It is distinguished by [1] the requirements of extensive formal training and learning, [2] admission to practice by qualifying licensure, [3] code of ethics imposing standards qualitatively and extensively beyond those that prevail or are tolerated in the marketplace, [4] a system for discipline of its members for a violation of the code of ethics, [5] duties to subordinate financial reward to social responsibility, and, notably, an obligation on its members, even in non-professional matters, to conduct themselves as members of a learned, disciplined and honorable occupation.<sup>9</sup>

It is because of these considerations that we have the **Library Bill of Rights** and the **ALA Code of Ethics**.<sup>10</sup> These ethical guidelines are not merely nice things to have. They are a large part of what differentiates information workers as professionals rather than as technicians. Yet the rules don't cover every situation. "Insisting that one's obligation is merely to follow the rules leads one to see one's ethical life as a life of avoiding the blame of having broken any rules. But in our ethical lives we need to attend not only to the rules, the principles of our professional or personal lives; we also need to be attentive to what effects following those rules may have on those with whom we live. Our sole goal ought not be to be morally blameless; we would also like to contribute to making better the lives of those around us and who share our communities."<sup>11</sup>

*continued on page 77*

### A Testimonial ... from page 75

during a time when I was faced with side-line issues with **NASIG** (the SARS epidemic) and it helped me see the bigger picture!

**Moon's** experiences with **Scarecrow Press** were also interesting reading, and gave me many insights into the world of scholarly publishing. I was surprised to learn of the connection between **Moon** and **Robbie Franklin** of **McFarland Press**, but it certainly all makes sense now. And **McFarland**, not surprisingly, is the publisher of this book!

It also gave me insights into how other small commercial, yet scholarly publishers do what they do, and how they manage to survive.

Therefore — I say to you — if you have any ambitions to library leadership — either as an officer in an association, or as a library director — read this book. And if you have an interest in library history — read this book. 